

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 118

March 29, 1995, 1:16 p.m.
Page S-4773 Temp. Record

DISASTER SUPPLEMENTAL-RESCISSIONS/Title I Substitute

SUBJECT: Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Assistance and Rescissions Act . . . H.R. 1158. Bond motion to table the Mikulski amendment No. 421 to the Hatfield substitute amendment No. 420.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 68-32

SYNOPSIS: As introduced, H.R. 1158, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Assistance and Rescissions Act, will provide \$5.360 billion in emergency appropriations for disaster assistance, and will rescind \$17.188 billion for various Departments and agencies.

The Hatfield substitute amendment would strike the provisions of H.R. 1158 and insert in lieu thereof the text of S. 617, as reported, which would provide \$6.700 billion in disaster assistance (the amount requested by the President), would rescind \$13.286 billion for various Departments and agencies, and would provide for expedited salvage timber sales on Federal lands for fiscal years 1995 and 1996.

The Mikulski amendment to the Hatfield substitute amendment would strike title I of the amendment (which contains all of the amendment's provisions except for those relating to salvage timber sales). The amendment would then rescind 1.72 percent from all discretionary accounts (except for Veterans' medical care, defense readiness, food and nutrition programs, and the administrative costs of Social Security and Medicare) for a savings of \$6.7 billion, which would be provided as disaster assistance. Finally, the amendment would direct authorizing committees to identify the mechanism and funding source for a contingency account for future disasters.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Bond moved to table the Mikulski amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

The Mikulski amendment would strike title I and replace it with a new proposal to provide \$6.7 billion in disaster relief and to

(See other side)

YEAS (68)			NAYS (32)		NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (54 or 100%)	Democrats (14 or 30%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (32 or 70%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hutchison	Bingaman		Akaka		
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Bradley		Baucus		
Bennett	Jeffords	Byrd		Biden		
Bond	Kassebaum	Conrad		Boxer		
Brown	Kempthorne	Dorgan		Breaux		
Burns	Kyl	Feingold		Bryan		
Campbell	Lott	Graham		Bumpers		
Chafee	Lugar	Hollings		Daschle		
Coats	Mack	Inouye		Dodd		
Cochran	McCain	Kohl		Exon		
Cohen	McConnell	Lieberman		Feinstein		
Coverdell	Murkowski	Moynihan		Ford		
Craig	Nickles	Nunn		Glenn		
D'Amato	Packwood	Robb		Harkin		
DeWine	Pressler			Heflin		
Dole	Roth			Johnston		
Domenici	Santorum					
Faircloth	Shelby					
Frist	Simpson					
Gorton	Smith					
Gramm	Snowe					
Grams	Specter					
Grassley	Stevens					
Gregg	Thomas					
Hatch	Thompson					
Hatfield	Thurmond					
Helms	Warner					

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

pay for that relief by making an across-the-board, \$6.7 billion cut in most discretionary accounts. This proposal is inadequate. The language the amendment would strike would provide the same amount of disaster relief and would provide twice as much in offsets. While the Mikulski amendment would not irresponsibly add the \$6.7 billion cost of this disaster relief to the deficit, as urged by President Clinton, it would fail to reduce the deficit. With a \$5 trillion debt, treading water on spending bills is not enough—real cuts need to be made. The bottom line is that the Hatfield substitute amendment would reduce the deficit and the Mikulski amendment would not.

A major reason Senators have offered the Mikulski amendment is that they believe the proposed rescissions in the underlying Hatfield amendment are unfair. They have observed that a disproportionate share of those rescissions would be for programs under the jurisdiction of the Veterans Affairs/Housing and Urban Development (VA/HUD) Appropriations subcommittee. Their conclusion from this observation is that those cuts were proposed because disaster aid flows through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is under the subcommittee's jurisdiction. We disagree with this conclusion. The proposed rescissions in the Hatfield amendment for programs under the VA/HUD subcommittee's jurisdiction were proposed because they are justified. Most of those rescissions would be from HUD. HUD has large unobligated balances, plus it has carry-over funds from last year. Additionally, most of the HUD rescissions would come from new initiatives. Funding shortfalls are projected for HUD in future years, so it is unwise to start new initiatives at present. We agree that the VA/HUD Appropriations subcommittee should not be the sole source for offsetting disaster costs, but that principle was not followed in drafting the Hatfield substitute amendment.

The final portion of the Mikulski amendment would direct authorizing committees to come up with a proposal for a disaster aid contingency fund, and to identify a funding mechanism for that fund. We certainly have no problem with this portion of the amendment. Republican Senators have suggested such funds in the past, but have had their ideas shot down on party-line votes. We may not be able to predict when and where disasters will occur, but we know they are likely to occur, so it would be appropriate to set aside funds ahead of time in anticipation of their occurring.

Though we agree with creating a disaster assistance fund, we disagree that the proposed rescissions in the Hatfield amendment are unfair, and we oppose lowering the total amount of rescissions to be made. Therefore, we urge our colleagues to join us in tabling the Mikulski amendment.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Hatfield substitute amendment would provide \$6.7 billion in disaster relief through FEMA, which is funded through the VA/HUD subcommittee, and would rescind \$6.8 billion from other programs that are under the jurisdiction of that subcommittee. It would then make additional rescissions from other areas and would apply the savings from those rescissions to deficit reduction. We think it is unfair to make the VA/HUD subcommittee pay entirely for disaster assistance by cutting programs under its control solely because it happens to have jurisdiction over FEMA. Disasters are of national concern, so all functions of the Federal Government should share in paying their costs. Veterans, and needy Americans who rely on HUD housing, should not bear all the burden. Accordingly, the Mikulski amendment would strike the rescissions for the programs funded through the VA/HUD subcommittee and would make an across-the-board rescission instead. Further, we do not think it is necessary to make additional rescissions for deficit reduction. By law, every penny of this bill can be deficit spending, because the President has designated it as emergency spending; therefore, we think it is sufficiently responsible just to pay for the bill without also insisting on creating savings to be used for reducing the deficit. We are therefore pleased that the Mikulski amendment would eliminate the additional proposed rescissions in the Hatfield amendment. We are also pleased that the Mikulski amendment would order the authorizing committees to come up with a way of funding future disaster supplementals. By acting ahead of time, we will be able to avoid future debates such as the one we are having here today. In sum, the Mikulski amendment offers a fair way of paying for this disaster supplemental bill, and the means of avoiding future disputes on such bills, so we are happy to give it our support.